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SERMON BY THE REV. JAMES MONTGOMERY, D. D.

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BRIEF MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. JAMES MONTGOMERY, D. D.

BY HIS FRIEND

THE RT. REV. GEORGE W. DOANE, D. D.

"The righteous hath hope in his death."

THE Rev. James Montgomery, D. D. Rector of St. Stephen's Church, Philadelphia, whose lamented death on the morning of the 17th of March, has been recorded in this paper, was born in Philadelphia, on the 25th day of November, 1787. He received his preparatory education at Dr. Hall's private seminary in Maryland, and at the Grammar School in Princeton, New-Jersey. He graduated at Princeton College, in 1805. After which he read law in the office of Judge Hopkinson, in Philadelphia, and was in due time admitted to the bar. After some years practice of the law he became a candidate for holy orders, in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and was ordained deacon, by Bishop White, in Philadelphia, August 25th, 1816. Having been elected Rector of St. Michael's Church, Trenton, New-Jersey, he was there ordained priest, by Bishop Croes, October 7, 1817, and instituted on the following day. In April, 1818, he removed to New-York, having been elected Rector of Grace Church in that city. In 1820, he resigned his rectorship, and returned to his native state, residing near Philadelphia, and officiating in some of the vacant Churches in that vicinity, until the formation of the new parish of St. Stephen's, to the rectorship of which he was elected. The Church was consecrated, February, 27, 1823; the consecration sermon being preached

by his early and steadfast friend, Bishop Hobart. Dr. Montgomery, at the time of his decease, was a member of the Standing Committee of the diocese of Pennsylvania, which he had several times represented in the General Convention. He was also a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, and a Trustee of the General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Keeping himself back from none of the institutions or interests of the Church which his industry or influence could serve, and constant and conscientious in the discharge of his duty to all, there is not a clergyman of his order whose removal from her councils and concerns could have been more widely felt or more deeply lamented. But if it be said, as surely it must, that to lose such a servant from her altars is a loss indeed, it should also be remembered, and most thankfully acknowledged, that to have such to lose, is indeed a favour from the Lord. The record of his devoted and most useful life, and of his blessed and triumphant death, as it is his legacy to the Church, which he loved as his "chief joy," so it should be cherished by us as the most precious memorial of our brother who has gone before us to his rest, and an inspiring argument to lay hold, with the vigorous grasp of a true and living faith, upon that cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, which in his life and doctrines he so faithfully proclaimed, and which made him, through the languor of sickness, and in the agony of death, "more than conqueror."

The subject of our present notice was amiable and exemplary from his earliest years. Having lost his father, when but seven years old, the sense of duty to a tender and devoted mother was continually felt by him, he has often been heard to say, as a monitor against temptation, and a motive to duty; and in dangerous moments was, and was felt to be, under God, his defence and deliverance. Thus does the Father of mankind, in his dispensations towards his children, beautifully blend together the economy of providence, and the economy of grace, and make holier the holy ties of nature, by the blessed unction of the sanctifying Spirit. And thus, not seldom, does he fulfil his

gracious promises to the widow and the fatherless, by rendering the afflictive dispensation which has made them such, the instrument of religious influence and the occasion of spiritual blessing. "Just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints! In wrath, thou still rememberest mercy." With young Montgomery, in his earlier years, the writer had no acquaintance, nor is there probably any thing in regard to them that requires to be recorded. His was not one of those precocious minds that startle for a season, to disappoint the expectation which has been awakened. It was rather sure and steady, than rapid in its acquirements and achievements. His scholarship was ripe and good. His acquaintance with books was large, and of a character the most profitable. He had an unusual share of that practical wisdom which comes from observation and intercourse with men, not without deep reflection. He united, in a rare degree, the qualities of action and of meditation. There was no man more deeply contemplative. In all matters of business there were few men more truly effective. His mind was still maturing, and his usefulness still increasing, and his reputation still advancing, when it pleased the Lord to take him from among us. The testimony which all bear of his childhood and youth, that he was "a good boy," and an exemplary young man, was never contradicted by the course of his after life. He grew up in the love and confidence, and reverence of the companions of his early days; and a most useful and successful ministry, increasing to the last in usefulness, and in that best success, the winning of immortal souls, exercised for many years in the place of his birth, and among those who had always known him, is most conclusive evidence to the purity, the consistency, and the stability of his character. And such were indeed its traits. In the discharge of all the duties and relations of life, he was uniformly excellent. The sacred circle of domestic sorrow may not be invaded, nor have the hearts that knew it best, the power to tell what tenderness and truth and love, and whatever else adorned and could endear the son, the brother, the husband and the father, have been withdrawn from earth. As a citizen, a neighbour, and above all as a friend,

he never was surpassed. He was always kind, affable and cheerful. He was accessible to all. With those whom he loved he indulged in an habitual playfulness, which well bespoke the pleasing quiet of a heart at peace with all the world. His counsel, his assistance, and his purse, were always at the service of all who needed them. And in those rarer and more difficult offices of friendship, in which prudence, gentleness, constancy, and Christian love are called in aid of mental or of moral infirmity or suffering, to counsel, to console, to sustain, or to animate, there was a delicacy, a candour, a discrimination, a generosity, and an engagedness of spirit in him, which gave him acceptance and influence to a wonderful extent, and almost identifying him with their particular grief, made him welcome beyond most other men to such as are "in heaviness through manifold temptations." There was probably none of his acquaintance who being "in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity," would not have resorted to Dr. Montgomery; and none who did, that if they found not succour and relief, did not find comfort and encouragement in the assurance of the tenderest sympathy.

But it is in his higher and more sacred character as a Christian, a churchman, and a Christian minister, that Dr. Montgomery claims our chief regards; and while in these respects we most lament his loss, they afford assurance that in our loss he has found infinite gain, and enable us to "rejoice in tribulation also." It was during his engagement in the practice of the law, that he attained, through grace, to those convictions of his duty, which led him from being a pious member and communicant of the Church, to offer himself as a candidate for her ministry. Of the depth and sincerity of these convictions, no one can entertain a doubt. An ardent love of souls was the strong impulse of his life. Feeling in his own heart the power and comfort of religion, it was his desire and effort to bring others to the same experience. He was well convinced of the fall and guilt and ruin of our nature. He knew and felt that there was no other way of rescue and recovery, than the cleansing and atoning blood of Jesus. Justification by faith, and sanctifica-

tion through the Spirit, were to his mind and heart the great features of the Gospel. Of the plan of salvation by Jesus Christ, he considered the Church, as by the Lord's appointment, an integral part. He was anxious, therefore, to increase its influence, and bold and constant in the assertion and maintenance of its distinctive principles. Regarding it as God's ordinance, and its preservation in purity as of primary importance to the best interests of man, he would allow no compromise as to its ministry, its discipline, or its worship. What he longed for was the restoration of the primitive Church. He would often declare, that to enjoy that privilege, he would go to the ends of the earth. His favourite scheme, in which he desired to engage all who love the Lord Jesus, was the exhibition, in their original union, of what he loved to call "the sacred trial of principles," GOSPEL DOCTRINE, GOSPEL ORDER, and GOSPEL HOLINESS—the *truth* of the Gospel, in the *Church* of the Gospel, producing the *fruits* of the Gospel. It was the aspiration of a pure and elevated spirit, and in a brighter sphere its beautiful vision will be more than realized. Kind and amiable as our brother was, there was on some occasions a zealand impetuosity of spirit which betrayed him into error. It was the ardour of honest conviction, the glowing language of sincerity and truth. But it was apt to carry him too far. It sometimes took the appearance of violence and denunciation. Yet it never made him an enemy. All knew that however the tongue might seem to offend, the hand was true and the heart was warm. Though unquestionably an infirmity, it was felt to belong to a noble nature. That he was high minded and generous, all allowed. And they who were compelled to differ from him the most widely, still honoured him and loved him. At the time when the diocese of Pennsylvania was rent in sunder by contending interests, though his trumpet never gave an uncertain sound, nor lingered in the rear of what he deemed his duty, he maintained the respect and confidence of all. Without bating a jot of his integrity, he was able to take and keep the often questionable, and always difficult position, of mutual friend to brethren that were arrayed in open opposition; and was thus greatly ser-

viceable, and greatly to be honoured, in that work on which the Saviour has pronounced a blessing, the office of a peace-maker.

In his parochial relations, Dr. Montgomery was eminently useful, and eminently worthy of that "double honour," which an Apostle has awarded to them who "labour in the word and doctrine." It was the remark of one who belonged to his first parish, that he "wore himself out;" and how literally true it was, they well know, among whom his last ministrations were performed. He gave himself wholly to the work. He spared neither time nor toil. He preached with an earnestness, and sometimes a vehemency which the strongest constitution could scarcely bear. He felt his responsibility as the minister of a congregation, second to none in wealth, intelligence, and influence. He felt their danger as standing thus on the high places of society, and exposed to all the snares of luxury and fashion. Against this spirit of the world, from which he feared so much for them, he set himself with all the Baptist's fearlessness and candour. And his heart's desire and prayer to God for them was, that they might be saved. What he preached he commended to them by his practice. The generous disinterestedness which marked his relation to them was an assurance that he sought not theirs, but them. And as he went in and out among them, preaching the truth and administering the consolations of the Gospel from house to house, they could not but feel how the spirit of his Master animated all his exertions; and how worthy of their imitation, in meekness and patience, in guilelessness and honesty, in purity and charity, the example which he set them. It had been much if this were all his service. But while his first cares and the chief of his strength were given to the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer, he never forgot that he was a minister of the Holy Catholic Church, and that her general institutions had claims upon him not less positive than his parochial charge. He entered with characteristic zeal and industry into the interests, not only of the diocese of which he was a member, but of the whole American Church. Of all her clergy, there

were none more faithful or more useful to the two great institutions which have charge, respectively, of the education of her ministry, and of her general missionary interests.

It was in the midst of these arduous labours, that he was struck down, in a moment, by the disease which ended in his death. For several weeks he had been labouring with a cold, and oppression of the chest, which gave much anxiety to his family and friends, and to which he was repeatedly urged to pay proper attention. But his duties were pressing. The season of Advent he was anxious to improve for the edification of his people. He had lately commenced a week-day lecture in explanation of the epistle to the Romans. And habitually regardless of himself, he went on increasing his labours, when an entire respite was absolutely called for, and, if taken in time, would, in all human judgment, have prolonged his valuable life. On the last Sunday of the year, he preached with even more than his wonted earnestness. There was a solemnity in his manner which was spoken of at the time as peculiar and impressive. On the following day, he was much occupied in pastoral duty. And on the next, the last day of the year, was attacked with hemorrhage of the lungs. It was evident, from the first, that it was an attack which, more or less remotely, would prove fatal; and though the utmost that human skill and human love could do, was done, there was never the slightest mitigation of its destructive violence. To the question put to him during the first paroxysm of the disease, whether he knew the nature of his case, he replied, "yes, I know that my situation is very critical, that it is very uncertain which way it may turn; but turn which way it will, I am perfectly resigned to the will of God. I have human reasons for desiring to live, but He knows best, and will do right; and the lessons of resignation which I have preached to others, I am now myself to practise." Soon, however, the malady assumed its proverbially delusive influence over his judgment; and although he uniformly spoke with seriousness and solemnity of its possible issue, he for the most part appeared strongly impressed with the belief, that God had work for him to do, declared his determination to preach to his

people more plainly than he had ever done, saying that his first text should be, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God," and expressing the deepest anxiety that the present visitation should be made profitable to himself, his family, and his flock.

On Sunday evening, the 9th of March, the present writer, who had seen him constantly through his whole sickness, had a long conversation with him. He then appeared much better than at any period of it, and thought himself rapidly recovering. He conversed freely of God's goodness to him, and of his increased desires to serve and please him. He said much of the theme he most loved, the Church; and having but lately acquired strength enough to read it, expressed his entire approbation of the principles and views set forth in the sermon on "The office of a Bishop," recently preached at the consecration of his friend Dr. Otey—a testimony which is here recorded, that it may be known, that as a Churchman he continued till the last unchanged. On Monday night he suffered, as he related to the same friend, inexpressible agony of spirit, in the apprehension that for his neglect of his great privileges, God had forsaken him; but struggling against it with his utmost resolution, succeeded at last in the attainment of peace and composure, through fervent prayer. On Wednesday night he was evidently changed much for the worse, but still replied to a suggestion as to his receiving the Holy Communion, which was designed to intimate the opinion of his friend as to his danger, that he hoped to be able to go to his Church at Easter. It ought to be stated, that for some weeks he had been able to ride daily several miles. On Friday evening, having made his will, he sent for the same friend to sign it, as one of the witnesses. The marks of approaching dissolution were then apparent, yet he still expressed the conviction that God had work for him yet to do. "Yes, it may be so," it was replied, "for with Him all things are possible. But such is not the probable expectation, and in all human appearance a very little time will remove you to your rest." Not a muscle moved, not a tint of his complexion changed, there was not a visible motion of his

eye. "Well," he replied, "be that as it may, I am perfectly resigned."

On Sunday morning, March 16, a little after six, the writer was sent for to attend him. He hastened to his bedside and witnessed there a scene in which angels must have delighted, and which beggars all that he has seen on earth. In relating it I must be allowed to disembarrass myself of the restraints of a third person. He was lying in his bed with a prayer-book in his hand. He was evidently marked for the grave, but his countenance beamed with peace and joy. "I am glad to see you," I said, "so calm and tranquil." "Oh, my dear friend," he replied, "my *dear* friend, I am perfectly happy." And never did I see a man who seemed so fully to realize what he described. His wife, his mother, his children, and a female relative were present. "My beloved wife," he said, "has gone through with the service of the visitation of the sick, and there are two prayers there that express exactly what I want. She is now reading me some hymns, and I wish *you* to be with us, and when she is done, you will pray with us." At his request, with a voice that at once expressed how great the struggle was between her natural feeling and her desire to do his pleasure, she proceeded. It was the 32d hymn in our collection. At the end of every line, he made some comments. "*Welcome sweet day of rest.*" "Yes, welcome, welcome blessed day, day of peace and rest and holy joy!" "*That saw the Lord arise,*"—"that saw my precious Saviour physically arise from the tomb, rise for our justification, rise to be the light and glory of the world." "*Welcome to this reviving breast,*"—"Yes, reviving with new hopes of glory and of bliss." "*And these rejoicing eyes,*" "for though the light of day is not let in," (the shutters of his room were partly closed,) "they do enjoy the light of life —the only true and lasting light—which they who have not, walk in darkness, and know not whither they go. Bring them, blessed Jesus, bring them all, who know thee not, into the splendid circle of thy glory!" In this way he went on, with a fervour and a pathos which I should in vain attempt to express.

The 33d hymn, ("Another six days' work is done,") was then read, and amplified in the same delightful manner. He then took the book, and read it distinctly through. Then with a low clear voice, he sang it, and having finished, asked me to find him the doxology. "Now," said he, "stand up, and join with me." This done, he began to pronounce the blessing, when, as if correcting himself, he said, "do *you* do that;" responding aloud, "Amen, Amen." He then requested the window shutters to be thrown open. "Now," said he, addressing himself to me, "take notice, and bear witness fully and plainly, but not ostentatiously, *I die, I die in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ.* I put my whole trust for pardon and acceptance in the merits of his death. There are some that will say, 'Ah, Montgomery is converted; his sickness has done this.' Tell them no,—I was converted to God long before I was permitted to minister at his altar. And though I have erred and sinned, had my delinquencies and backslidings, he has graciously restored me, and set me on the rock. To that rock of ages, the Lord Jesus Christ, must all come who would be saved." He paused. "Now," said he, "I wish to receive the Holy Communion, and I wish you to make the arrangements." At one o'clock of the same day, it was administered by Bishop Onderdonk; there being present, beside myself, a clerical brother whom he had particularly requested should be asked to come, and a young friend from North Carolina, lately admitted as a doctor of medicine. He entered into the service with great feeling and fervour, responding with a firm voice throughout. When told to take the cup, as the blood of our Lord Jesus, "*that* I will," he said, "*that* I will." After the administration, "I wish you to take notice," he said, "that I have now discerned the Lord's body, as I never did before, and I confide as truly in my Saviour as if I saw him in his glory." It was his last testimony. Four hours afterward his mind wavered a little. He was occupied through the afternoon in singing hymns, at first distinctly, then the words ceased to be articulate, then the tune faltered on his tongue. At nine in the evening he fell into

a state of quiet from which he never was roused. From this time he sank gradually away, his moans grew fainter, his breath was more frequent, his pulse subsided. Without pain, without even the slightest motion to call our attention, we sat by his bed side in silence, numbering, as it were, the sands as they fell audibly from the glass. At one, of the morning of Monday, his spirit was commended in prayer to its merciful Creator, through the merits of his blessed Redeemer. He continued gradually to fail. His pulse was still. He ceased to breathe audibly. At two o'clock, without a groan or a struggle he expired. An infant's breath could not have passed away more gently. We kneeled beside him before we left the chamber of death, and implored for ourselves the comfort of His grace, who alone can bind up the broken in heart, and give them medicine to heal their sickness.

Such, in his life, and in his death, was our departed friend. It was his earnest wish that since he could not go to his pulpit, he might preach in his chamber. And seldom has a death-bed been more eloquent as "a preacher of righteousness." God grant that its lessons may not be lost! Especially may they not be lost upon that bereaved flock, in whose service he wore out his life, and whose spiritual welfare was his heart's desire upon the bed of death.—For himself, he rests in hope. "The righteous hath hope in his death." To die as he died, how much better is it than to live.* "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

*What follows is from a clerical friend, the Rev. William Croswell, in reply to a letter giving an account of Dr. Montgomery's last hours. "Your last most touching letter has made me 'weep with them that weep,' and left my heart more tender than ever, to the sacred sorrows of this week of the passion. And if never death was more full of the confidence of a certain faith, and of the comfort of a reasonable, religious and holy hope than that which you describe, surely never was death regarded with more of the passionate interest of a domestic attachment.—The following lines, the sincere impulse of my feelings on reading it, arrayed themselves almost spontaneously as they stand.

My brother, I have read
Of holy men, in Christ who fell asleep,
For whom no bitter tears of wo were shed—
I could not weep.

And thou thyself art one,
O man of loves, and truth without alloy!
The Master calleth, and thy work well done,
Enter thy joy!

To such as thee belong
The harmonies in which all heaven unite,
To share the 'inexpressive nuptial song,'
And walk in white.

And oh! thy Church, thy home,
Thy widowed home! Who shall forbid to grieve?
How may they bear the desolating gloom
Such partings leave?

Great Shepherd of the flock!
Even thou whose life was given for the sheep,
Sustain them in the overwhelming shock,
And safely keep."

INSCRIPTIONS

For the Monuments proposed to be erected by the Vestry of St. Stephen's.

FOR THE GRAVE STONE.

Here lies
all that was mortal
of
THE REVEREND JAMES MONTGOMERY, D. D.
Rector of St. Stephen's Church;
who died
March 17, 1834,
aged forty seven years.

Kind, generous, constant,
of integrity unstained, and fervent piety,
the delight of his family, an ornament of society, a pillar of the Church;
a learned divine,
a cogent preacher,
an unwearied pastor;
at home,
proclaiming with a burning zeal the merit of the Cross,
and urging his hearers to embrace it as their only hope;
abroad,
the steadfast friend and faithful servant of the general institutions of the Church;
every where,
the uncompromising champion of primitive order:
in life,
he adorned, through grace, the doctrine of the Gospel by a consistent practice;
and, in death,
was more than conqueror, through its saving faith.

ONLY IN THE CROSS.

FOR A MURAL TABLET.

The Reverend
JAMES MONTGOMERY, D. D.
the first Rector of this Church,
born, November 25, 1787,
died, March 17, 1834.

To establish and extend
what he loved to call
THE SACRED TRIAD OF PRINCIPLES;
GOSPEL DOCTRINE,
GOSPEL ORDER,
GOSPEL HOLINESS,—
the *truth* of the Gospel in the *Church* of the Gospel
producing
the *fruits* of the Gospel,—
was the labour of his life:
His last words were,
I DIE, I DIE IN THE FAITH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.
This stone,
with that in the adjoining ground
which marks the sacred resting-place of his remains,
attests
the sorrowing love of his bereaved flock.

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

THE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH:

ITS MEANING, ITS EXCELLENCES, AND THE DEFECTS IN ITS PERFORMANCE:

A Sermon,

BY REV. JAMES MONTGOMERY, D. D.
RECTOR OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA.

Exodus xii. 26.—"*What mean you by this service?*"

You need hardly be reminded that the chapter whence these words have been taken, is occupied chiefly with an account of the wonderful circumstances accompanying and following the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, particularly of the institution of the Passover, which was designed to be observed during the continuance of the nation, in commemoration of that event, and in relation to which it is said—"And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, *what mean you by this service?* that ye shall say, it is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses." Thus clearly implying that a faithful and reverential observance of this solemn rite could be secured only by an intelligent knowledge of the reasons of its institution and of the ends it was designed to subserve; and that its obligations could be sustained, and its solemnities sincerely and spiritually engaged in, only by regulating their deportment by a regard to the *meaning* of the Service.

If, under the burdensome and shadowy dispensation of the law, a due performance of its ceremonial requisitions demanded a clear apprehension of their design, and a conduct conformable thereto: not less, surely does the acceptable discharge of the

pure and spiritual service of the gospel worship, require a controlling sense of the authority by which it is enjoined, and of the salutary purposes which it was designed to promote.

Under the influence of this sentiment, I shall proceed, at once, to accommodate the text to the present design (which has been already announced) of inviting your consideration to the *meaning* of that service, which we profess to render to God, whenever we come up to his sanctuary, to worship him in the congregation of his saints; and to point out some instances of a defective, an unmeaning, and an irreverent performance of it.

With these views, I put to you—in the way both of affectionate reproof, and of required edification—the question "*what mean you by this service?*" To supply an answer to which, your attention is in the first place called to the *meaning* of the Service which you profess to pay; or what is the end and purpose for which it was enjoined, and in reference to which we use it.

Can it be necessary, my brethren, to detain you long in the developement of this point? Need your minds be stirred up to a remembrance of those great purposes, in reference to which alone, the religious service you here render has any significancy or value? Do you require to be told that you approach this Sanctuary of the Lord, *as sinners*, obnoxious on account of your native depravity, and of your manifold offences, to his just indignation? That you come here to humble yourselves under a penitential sense of your iniquities—to confess that you have erred and strayed from his ways like lost sheep, and that there is no health in you; to implore his mercy and forgiveness, as if you were supplicating for your very life; to propitiate his favour by pleading before him the perfect righteousness and the sufficient merits of his only begotten Son; to seek, by a firm and confiding trust in his atonement, the only security from the penal consequences of your guilt, the only remedial provision against its baleful and prevailing dominion; to obtain an interest in the meritorious and prevailing intercession of your Advocate with the Father; to invoke his life-giving Spirit for those holy influences which alone can cleanse the thoughts of your hearts, renew you in the spirit of your minds, impart to you

ability to run with success the race that is set before you, and render you meet for your heavenly inheritance.

Do you not know that you enter upon this service, as *impotent, dependent creatures*, having nothing in yourselves whereof to glory, and confessing that you owe all you have and are, your present blessings and efficiency, your future hopes and enjoyments, to the boundless compassion of him in whom you live and move and have your being? That you come, worms of the dust, atoms of a moment, to bow yourselves before the high God, the source of all being, the centre of all perfection, the dispenser of all power?

And under a feeling sense of your unworthiness and guilt, your ingratitude and rebellion, do you not come here to recognize the claims which the exhaustless love and compassion of your heavenly parent have upon you? to acknowledge that it is of his mercies that you are not consumed—to render unto him the tribute of your devout thanksgiving for all his benefits—the numberless undeserved favours he has showered upon your probationary path, the splendid untold and ineffable hopes which he has opened to your view as candidates for eternal bliss?

If these things be so, my brethren, ought not your deportment, while engaged in this consecrated exercise, to correspond with the sentiments and sensibilities it implies? Ought you not as *sinners* to be subdued to holy contrition? As *impotent, dependent creatures*, ought you not approach, with tremulous awe, the uncreated Majesty! As recipients of kind Heaven's choicest, undeserved favours, ought you not to invoke your souls to praise the Lord, and all that is within you to bless his holy name?

Such you will readily grant, is the *meaning* of the homage and service which you profess to pay in the courts of the Lord. And I would remark, in further developing our subject, that the formulary of devotion which is the medium of your pious aspirations, is admirably adapted to express that meaning, and to excite and cherish all the correspondent sensibilities of an enlightened and genuine devotion.

The liturgy of our Church should be endeared to us, and claims our devout, consistent and steadfast use, by many obvious

and I would fain say, irresistible considerations. Time will allow me to specify a few only.

In the purity and scriptural simplicity of its *doctrines*, we recognize a strong claim upon our attachment. Speaking in many of its most interesting parts, the very language of inspiration, and in all others, expressing the simple and essential verities of the gospel, in a language at once forcible, appropriate, perspicuous and devoted,—assimilating itself, like the truths to which it gives utterance, to its infallible prototype; embodying those very forms of sound words, which even in apostolic times and by apostolic sanction, regulated the faith and guided the devotions of primitive piety; animated and kindling with those very supplications and praises which glowed upon the lips, and burst from the hearts, of a Chrysostom, a Basil, a Tertullian and an Ambrose; exhibiting in short, a synopsis of the faith and devotion of the best and purest ages of the Church; before heresy had materially marred the simplicity of the one, or superstition disfigured the fair beauty of the other; avoiding alike the corruptions of superstition, and the unwarrantable results of an overweening and prurient desire of *reform*, which sought the demolition of what had been consecrated by the wisdom of Apostles and Martyrs, and applied its efforts, with a mistaken zeal, to remove from the christian fabric, not its counterfeit and false appendages only, but the very walls and pillars which sustained it on its foundation—it rose, an imperishable monument, not only of the moderation and wisdom and piety of the Cranmers, and Ridleys, and Latimers, of the English Reformation; but of the wonderful and unparalleled success with which they accomplished the delicate and difficult task, of exhibiting the Church, shorn of the base inventions and tawdry appendages of a long night of error, and arrayed in the beautiful garments of her pristine faith and order.

With these claims upon our attachment, does the Liturgy come to *us*—improved where it was susceptible of improvement; and adapted to the change of local and national circumstances.

But besides the recommendations we have just noticed, the

sublimity and appropriateness of its language ought to be displayed for the confirmation of our attachment.

The most erudite and polished scholars, have, without exception, been voluntary and enthusiastic admirers of the language of our Liturgy. Indeed, next to the Sacred Record, it is the most unexceptionable exemplar of pure and undefiled English—and like that Record, it has this remarkable peculiarity, that while the phraseology of contemporaneous writings, has, in the necessary mutations of things, become obsolete and obscure, the language of our Liturgy, remains to this day, and it is no presumption to say, will remain for ages to come, the model of whatever is excellent in diction and style. And where shall we find language better, or so well suited to express all the varied exercises of the devout heart. The penitential supplications—how simple and fervent and natural! Its hymns and anthems of praise, how glowing and elevated and sublime! Who can listen to the jubilant and transporting strains of the *Gloria in Excelsis*, or the *Te Deum*, the *Benedic* or *Cantate*, without feeling his heart kindled with holy fire, by the intense contemplation of the glorious theme! In a word, in all its departments, whether of prayer or praise, of humiliation or exultation, of deprecation or thanksgiving, it is characterized by expressions admirably adapted to the peculiar exercise and the respective themes. You no where meet with pomp of diction, inordinate imagery, or parade of sentiment—but all is natural and simple, perspicuous and expressive, forcible and emphatic, devout and elevating.

The *comprehensiveness and fervour of its devotions*, constitutes another claim upon our attachment.

It contains prayers almost infinitely varied in their subjects and arrangement. And in every conceivable or possible exigency of the christian, much may be found in it singularly adapted to his case. In the form of sententious collects, he is furnished with devotions, full of the most weighty sentiment, and always sure to supply some aid to the spirit bowed down under a sense of its infirmities—some refreshment to the wearied and heavy laden, and some edification to the meditative mind. In

its more enlarged and continuous forms, it supplies the most suitable and fervent exercises for worship, whether in the closet, the family, or the sanctuary. Its Litany is a composition absolutely unrivalled, while its occasional offices, adapted to the various solemnities of our holy religion, all partake of the general excellence, and are highly calculated at once to illustrate their subjects, and to engage a heartfelt conformity to their purposes. The whole book breathes the most refined, scriptural, and fervent spirituality. And in his most spiritual frame, and in his most ardent aspirations, the devout worshipper will always find the Liturgy breathing a higher spirituality, and glowing with a brighter flame.

The *variety and interest of its arrangements*, is another characteristic that deserves a passing notice. There is no inordinate, monotonous, and fatiguing indulgence in any one exercise, or upon any one theme. But by a judicious change and alternation, the relief and charm of variety, serve to give interest to its performance, and impressiveness to its instructions. While the prominence which is given to the recognition of the primary articles of our holy faith, at every recurring celebration of the service, supplies at once a safe remembrance of the cardinal truths of Christianity, and a preservative effectual, so far as human prudence can be *effectual*, against those deadly heresies, which, where such defences have been wanting, have invaded the integrity of Gospel truth, and in some cases, swept away with a ruthless hand every thing that deserves to be dignified with the name of Christianity. This defensive character is enhanced by the importance which the Church attaches to the public reading of the Scriptures. By a regular course of reading, she carries her children once over the entire Scriptures—with the exception of a few parts not deemed suitable to a public exercise—and gives a *repetition* to the more immediately interesting portion of the scriptures, the *New Testament*, while by edifying *selections* suited to all her feasts and fasts, she seeks to impress deeply on the mind, the momentous truths of salvation. This is confessedly a distinguishing excellence of our Church; and constitutes a most favourable contrast with other communities

of professing Christians, who, laying at least equal claims to evangelical purity of character, would seem to manifest in this respect, less regard to the lively oracles of truth. And we cannot but express the hope, that this provision of our ritual will be preserved *inviolate*—and the deep regret, that any should be found, whether from personal inclination, or a mistaken accommodation to others, willing, on *any* occasion, to limit this wholesome provision, and thus far, certainly, to defeat the wise and deliberate designs of the Church.

The only remaining recommendation of our Liturgy, which we shall notice, is—*its popular, or congregational character.*

Our Church is favourably distinguished from other denominations of Protestant Christians, by the *admirable* and truly evangelical *form* which she provides, and authoritatively enjoins upon her children. So that, while in regard to them, the devotions of the congregation are dependent upon the competency, taste, feeling, views, or religious temperament of the leaders; ours have no relation to such contingencies, can be offered without any mental examination of their fitness and verity, and furnish the delightful assurance, that, if our *hearts* respond to the *words*, we offer up our prayers and praises in a manner most rational, dignified, appropriate, safe and scriptural, and therefore, we may hope most acceptable to a God of *order*. To place this point in a strong light let it be remarked, that much of what is said against the expediency of *forms of prayer*, might be obviated by the simple consideration, that even, on the most favourable supposition, in the case, suppose, of *direct* inspiration in the mind of the leader of the devotion—which no sober minded and well informed man will now pretend to—however, original and extemporaneous the prayer may be to *him*, yet as to the *congregation*, it is, to all intents and purposes, a *form*, which is to guide their devotions, as authoritatively as a *written* form could do. So that the question is not, *form* or *no form*—but as to the *different kinds* of forms, and who, in such a statement of the case, can hesitate to prefer a form which is certain, appropriate, established, and provided by the concentrated wisdom and piety of the purest, and the most enlightened Chris-

tians, before one which is capricious, offering no security for its adaptation to individual necessities, and however excellent, the product of but *one* intellect, the incense of but *one* heart.

As in the general and established character of our *form*, so also in its *popular* or *congregational* complexion it has a decided advantage over all others. Following the example of the Church of God, in the olden time, in which, besides the consecrated priests, the worshippers bore an audible, responsive, and necessary part in the stated devotions of the Temple—sanctioned moreover, by those sublime and glowing descriptions of the Celestial Courts, which represent the rapt seraphs, as not only attunating with each other, the song of praise, but also, as conducting in alternate and responsive order, the burning adorations of the ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of redeemed intelligences; in the path of the primitive disciples and of the very Apostles of her Lord; and influenced by the example of the Church in her halcyon days, as well, as by a regard to the reasonableness and fitness of the thing itself; the Church to which we belong, has made the participation of the *congregation* in the public service, a necessary and important ingredient of its celebration. In the confession and in the prayer of our Lord, *the people*—(not the clerk as their representative) are solemnly and audibly to follow the officiating minister. In the psalter the minister and *people* (not the clerk) are in alternate order to offer up their joint adorations and praises. While by the audible and emphatic *Amen*, the *people* (not the clerk) are to *express* their concurrence in every prayer, and thus, by an intelligible, and rational token, to appropriate it to themselves. It is to be deeply lamented that this requirement of our Liturgy, should be practically so generally and sadly neglected, and that thus one of its chief attractions, and one of its most impressive exhibitions, should be so pitiably marred, if not entirely contravened. But we shall notice this subject again, under our last division, in which we design to point out some instances of an incongruous and defective performance of our service, in the anxious hope, and with the sin-

cere prayer, that it may conduce to a rectification of the faults mentioned, and to the general improvement, and to a more worthy illustration of our incomparable Liturgy.

The prevailing habit of *late attendance* first demands a passing censure. The remarks to be made, are addressed to those persons, only, who have no excuse for this habit, and whose fault might be corrected, without any inconvenience or suffering, by a more adequate and reverential sense of the solemn duty they come here to discharge ; indeed I may say, by a more sober and reflective regard to the *proprieties* and *decencies* of the matter.

It would certainly be useless to occupy you with a formal argument to prove the impropriety of this habit. Its irreverence is palpable, and if, under analogous circumstances of mere human interest, it would be thought that disrespect were shown to a fellow being, who, from the prescriptions of society, or the courtesies of life, should have a claim upon our deference and respect, what shall be said, in extenuation of such conduct, in reference to that Great Being, who, though he inhabits immensity, yet is present, in an especial manner, in this consecrated place, and to whose footstool we should repair, not only with reverential fear, but with an anxious desire to compose the spirit, by a few moments meditation, before attention is called to the immediate objects of our assembling by the solemn annunciation—"*The Lord is in his Holy Temple, let all the earth keep silence before him.*"

But besides the obvious irreverence of this habit, it is displayed unfavourably, by the consideration, that, in consequence of it, some of the most impressive, and I may say, essential parts of the service are lost, to mention only the general confession, and the authoritative declaration of remission of sin to the faithful and penitent, which, there is not only no reason for treating with such a slight, but in which every one, who is in earnest and sincere in his approaches to God, will be most anxious to concur, and to manifest his sense of their importance to the integrity of the worship of God's house. When in addition to all this, we consider that it involves a most ungrateful

and unseasonable interruption to those, who, glad when they were bid to come "up to the house of the Lord," may wish, and do wish, for undisturbed devotion to their worship: and moreover, that it is a circumstance to which the officiating minister cannot be indifferent, and in regard to which I am not ashamed to avow my own peculiar sensitiveness, when these things are considered, the habit censured will stand out, in broad relief, as decidedly unbecoming and irreverent.

But what shall we say of—what I could devoutly wish were an empty censure—*irreverence of deportment*, while engaged in the solemn exercises of the sanctuary. The hurried entrance, the reckless and vacant unconcern too generally manifested upon taking their seats, the rare exhibition of that tremulous respect, and of that absorbing interest in the great object of their resorting to the sanctuary, which will always, in our Churches at least, manifest themselves, by an humble ejaculation to the throne of Heaven, for its blessing upon the sacred exercises—the inconsiderate, and most unseasonable levity, which in its several manifestations of thoughtless mirth, social greetings, and even of incongruous converse, characterizes some, the listless and unoccupied bearing of others, the general indifference to the distinctive excellence of the service, the prescribed use of the Prayer-Book, and the general inattention to the obvious proprieties of posture, in the various exercises of worship, the drowsy attitude, the uncomely, impatient and uneasy air, and palpable indication, that on whatever else the mind may be fixed, it is not intent on what ought to be its present and engrossing concern, these exhibitions of irreverence need but to be hinted at, in order to receive their merited condemnation.

The *very general neglect of the responsive part of our service*, is another defect deeply to be lamented, and calling for expostulation and exposure.

This arrangement constitutes, as we have already remarked, one of the characteristic excellencies of our service, and when developed and exhibited in due and solemn prominence, must commend itself to every reflecting, not to say, every pious mind.

Indeed, the practical beauty, and I may say, the practical *advantage* too, of our Liturgy, depend upon its proper performance in this respect. What can be conceived of, more solemn, more impressive, more edifying, than the spectacle of a large congregation devoutly and audibly engaged in the service of the Lord of Hosts, and expressing their concurrence in the prayers offered up by his ministering servant, in the loud and earnest *Amen*. Who, in the view, and under the influence of such an exhibition, would not exclaim—*Surely it is good for us to be here—This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven.* Would that this were not so rare an occurrence! Would that the humble and devout worshipper could more frequently experience the refreshing and elevating influences of such a scene! Would that the Lord were always worshipped in *this beauty of holiness!*

But how sad and affecting the contrast presented by the constantly recurring neglect of this requirement of our Liturgy, in this our place of prayer! The most interesting and animating parts of the service, rendered dull, and unmeaning, cold and lifeless, by the unworthy manner in which they are performed! The scene often witnessed, of the responsive prayers and praises being confined as to their audible expression to the minister and his clerk, is the direct opposite to *that* which ought to be displayed, and which *would* be displayed if we duly estimated our advantages, and duly complied with the requisitions of the Church.

What more meagre, uninteresting, and irrational, than such a perversion of the service! Growing obviously out of a prevalent insensibility to the infinite importance of religion, it is lamentably calculated to aggravate the evil which gives it birth. In the mind of a stranger to our worship, who might enter this sanctuary at such a conjuncture, what other emotions could arise, than those of surprise and wonder! Whatever *else* he might be tempted to say of us, he would not fall prostrate and *confess that God was with us of a truth!* And your preacher can but sympathize in the feelings of such a person. He often feels pained to grief and sickness, in finding that his devotional

sensibilities are blunted, and his aspirations quenched, by the prevailing indifference and apathy: that his spirit, when it would soar to Heaven, is drawn back, and frozen down to this cold earth, by the deadly chilness of the service. Most ardently does he wish and pray for a general improvement in this respect. Let every member of the congregation, under a sense of *his own* personal obligations, resolve henceforth to take his *personal* part, in the service of the sanctuary. Let him, in the fear of God, and not regarding the opinion of man, begin to utter forth the prayers and praises which the Church furnishes him. Let each one consider his individual responsibility, and not measuring himself by others, determine to do *his* duty. The effect will prove most happy and benign. Though but a spark may be elicited here and there, yet their concentrated fervour will kindle a flame, which may curl to Heaven, and rise up an acceptable memorial there.

We hasten to specify the remaining instances of a defective performance of our service, which require a *distinct*, though it shall be, a *brief* notice.

The remarks already made in relation to the prevailing neglect of the responses, will apply in their spirit, to the still more obvious *neglect of singing.*

It is not given to *all* to express in *musical* tone and measure, the melody which they make in their hearts to the Lord. And there are some, upon whom the captivating and thrilling influence of harmony produces no pathetic effect; in whose minds there is not found a chord to vibrate in unison with its impulses. To such of course what is here said has no application, and we cannot require from them improvement in this respect. But to *all*, to whom the talent *is* given, and how many such are to be found in this congregation, and to *them* we would address our remonstrance.

The connexion of music with devotion, and the aid, and devotion it imparts to religious sensibility, have always been felt and acknowledged by those whose hearts were at all attuned to its influences. The sweet psalmist of Israel consecrated his harp to the praises of the Lord, and to the melting, the exciting

and the glowing energy of the music of his soul, we were indebted for some of his most pathetic, jubilant, and spirit-stirring strains. The power of melody and harmony, was always employed in the Jewish Temple, to give interest to its solemn services, and to exalt the contemplation of the worshipper to the presiding Divinity; and in every age of the Christian Church, from its first establishment to this our day, the praises of the faithful have constantly ascended, upborne on the wings of melody; and what more interesting than the *full* and *swelling* chorus of Christian praise! To hear the mingling voices of a congregation pouring forth loud *pæans* to the Almighty King! What heart does not *glow* with new fires, and what *bosom* does not throb with mysterious rapture! But alas! how different is the exhibition, which we are too frequently called to witness! How tame and insipid, how vain and irrational, how cold and deadening the effect, when the *tuneful* voices are confined to the choir, with here and there a *timid* and *half*-suppressed attempt to take a part in the concert! How *deeply* to be deplored is it, that there should be so general a disposition to devolve this delightful exercise upon those who are appointed to lead it! Under such circumstances, however scientific and well performed the music, yet as to all devotional effect, as to the purposes in reference to which alone it is admissible, it is altogether nugatory, an unmeaning and an unprofitable pageant.

One more censure, and I have done. In tracing out the instances of defective, or impressive performance of our service, it would be an omission to pass by the *irreverent* and *unbecoming haste* too commonly observable in leaving the house of God. Much has been said on *this* point, on former occasions, but the conviction that we have been rather retrograding of late, prompts a renewed effort to correct what is justly considered a *blemish* in our deportment in the worship of God. What more deserves the imputation, than the flurry and the impatience, the unseemly rush and tumult, the frivolity and inconsideration, so often exhibited immediately upon the dismission of the congretion. How incongruous with that frame of mind, with which we ought to leave the Lord's Temple! How destructive of all

serious recollection, of all hopeful impression! How fraught with disrespect and irreverence to Him, in whose especial presence we stand, to betray uneasiness in his service and an inordinate sensibility to its restraints, by *rushing* from his courts! I would not be thought superstitious, nor would I exact from you any compliance justly obnoxious to such an imputation. But I know not what is meant by the solemn and impressive service by which this Church has been consecrated to the Almighty, if it was not to invest it with an ideal sanctity, which should always claim a correspondent respect and reverence: and this too, founded upon that principle of our nature, the law of association, so operative and influential in every department, and never subservient to more salutary purposes, than when it is called in to give sacredness to the edifices and to all the institutions of our holy religion. This consideration should induce a reverential deportment at *all times*, in reference to the house of God. At our coming in, and going out; while within the sacred inclosure, whether for purposes of stated worship, or for casual occasions; in *any* situation that brings us within the operation of this principle, we should exhibit a becoming sensibility to its influence. A just regard to this principle would itself correct the fault under notice. But when it is considered, moreover, how inconsistent it is with the solemnity of the duty in which we have been professedly engaged; how destructive of all good impressions; how demonstrative of a vain and thoughtless temperament; it will be acknowledged that there is abundant ground and reason for this censure, which is given in the hope that it may induce to an improvement in this respect: that our manner of leaving the house of God, may correspond with the deportment which has been recommended as becoming the duties in which we have been engaged: that our irreverent haste may give place to the solemn pause, and the silent ejaculations; and our unseasonable and inconsiderate converse, to that *thoughtful* and *serious* mood and bearing, which would evince that the service in which we have been engaged was not without some impression, and that we were not insensible to its object and *meaning*.

I have thus, my brethren endeavoured faithfully, but with conscious imperfection, to explain the *meaning* of the *service* which you here profess to render to God; to demonstrate the adaptation of the Liturgy to the just expression of that meaning; and to point out some *defects* in the manner of performing that service. The specification under the last head, has not been without extreme pain. You will believe me when I say that there is nothing more repugnant to my feelings than the office of a censor, and you will acknowledge that my censures have not been undeserved. I have endeavoured to discharge my duty, and in *that* consciousness I solicit your indulgent consideration of what has been said, and humbly implore the divine blessing upon it. AMEN.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

In thy great name, O Lord, we come—
To worship at thy feet;
Oh! pour thy Holy Spirit down
On all that now shall meet.

We come to hear Jehovah speak,
To *hear* the Saviour's voice;
Thy face and favour, Lord, we seek
Now make our hearts rejoice.

Teach us to *pray* and *praise*, and *fear*,
And *understand* thy word;
To feel thy blissful presence near,
And trust our living Lord.

Here let thy power, and grace be felt;
Thy love, and mercy known;
Our icy hearts, dear Jesus melt,
And break this flinty stone.

Let sinners, Lord, thy goodness prove,
And saints rejoice in thee;
Let rebels be subdued by love,
And to the Saviour flee.

This *house* with grace, and glory fill,
This congregation bless
Thy great salvation now reveal;—
Thy glorious righteousness.